



LEFT-Tops in Blues’ men perform at the extravaganza showcasing their vocal talents during their visit to Albuquerque’s Kiva Auditorium Feb. 3.

Riley and Molly Malcom, military dependents, took part in the audience participation portion of the Air Force Tops in Blue entertainment special at the Kiva Auditorium Feb. 3.



Munitions Airman wows crowd at ‘Tops in Blue’



Airman 1st Class Courtney Johnson, a saxophonist in the Tops in Blue entertainment troop, is assigned to the 898th Munitions Squadron at Kirtland AFB.



One of Kirtland AFB’s own, Airman 1st Class Courtney Johnson, 898th Munitions Squadron, performed in the Feb. 3 “Soaring with Eagles” Tops in Blue extravaganza at Albuquerque’s Kiva Auditorium.

Maj. Daniel Courtois, 898th Munitions Squadron commander, received a plaque in appreciation of his unit’s sacrifice of a team member during the yearlong duty performing with the Tops in Blue cast.

Saxophonist Airman Johnson joined the artistic troop in celebrating the Tops in Blue 50th anniversary in the show with medley of music from 1953 through the present.

Despite concerns about snow in the local area, a turnout of about 1,500 people filled the Kiva Auditorium for the free show that is presented in support of military members worldwide.

Photos by Todd Berenger

LEFT-Staff Sgt. Charles A. Cook, Jr., is serenaded by Staff Sgt. La-Kee Williams.

BELOW-Senior Airman Jeremy T. Jordan solos at the Feb. 3 Air Force Tops in Blue concert.



Children’s Dental Health Month

Mouthguards: a smart choice

FROM THE AMERICAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

It’s easy to take some things for granted until they’re suddenly gone. Have you ever thought about how it would feel if you lost one or two of your front teeth? You’d probably avoid smiling. It would be uncomfortable talking with someone face-to-face. It wouldn’t be easy pronouncing certain words. And how about eating an apple? Until you teeth are gone, you might not miss them.

Thousands of teens each year get hurt on the playing field, the basketball court or while skateboarding, biking or during other activities. Blows to the face in nearly every sport can injure your teeth, lips, cheeks and tongue.

A properly fitted mouthguard is an important piece of athletic gear that can protect you teeth and smile.

You don’t have to be on a football field however, to benefit from a mouthguard.

New findings in sports dentistry show that even in non-contact sports, such as gymnastics, mouthguards help protect teeth. Many experts recommend that a mouthguard be worn for any recreational activity that poses a risk of injury to the mouth.

There are three types of mouthguards. The ready-made, or stock, mouthguard; the mouth-formed “boil and bite” mouthguard, and the custom-made mouthguard from your den-

tist. All three mouthguards provide protection but vary in comfort and cost.

The most effective mouthguard should have several features. It should be resilient, tear-resistant and comfortable. It should fit properly and easy to clean, and not restrict your speech or breathing.

Generally, a mouthguard covers only the upper teeth but in some cases the dentist will make a mouthguard for the lower teeth. Your dentist can suggest the right mouthguard for you. If you have a mouthguard, take good care of it:

★ Before and after each use, rinse it with cold water or with an antiseptic rinse. You can clean it with toothpaste and a toothbrush, too.

★ When it’s not used, put your mouthguard in a firm, perforated container. This permits air circulation and helps prevent damage.

★ Avoid high temperatures, such as hot water, hot surfaces or direct sunlight, which can distort the mouthguard.

★ Check it out for tears, holes and to see whether it has become loose. A mouthguard that’s torn or in bad shape can irritate you mouth and lessen the amount of protection it provides.

★ Have regular checkups and bring your mouthguard along so the dentist can make sure it’s still in good condition.

Don’t take your teeth for granted. Be cool. Protect you smile. Wear a mouthguard.

VA celebrates National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans

The New Mexico Veterans Affairs Health Care System celebrates the 26th annual National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans, Feb. 8-14, with various activities occurring at the Albuquerque Veterans Affairs Medical Center:

★ Feb. 9, Opening ceremony, lobby of Building #41 (main medical facility), 10 a.m., with refreshments

★ Feb. 10, Moriarty High School Junior ROTC meets with hospitalized veterans, 10 a.m.

★ Feb. 11, Representatives from the Salvation Army meet with inpatients, 10:30 a.m. and the Kirtland Officers’ Spouses Club holds a Valentine Party for Ward 4D inpatients, 10:30 a.m.

★ Feb. 12, Brig. Gen. Kenny Montoya, New Mexico National Guard commander, meets with veterans, 2 p.m.

★ Feb. 13, Avenue of Flags at the Medical Center, 7 a.m.-3 p.m. Col. Hank Andrews, 377th Air Base Wing commander, and Col. Steven

Bower, 377th Air Base Wing vice commander, visit inpatients 11 a.m.

The VA national salute program began in 1978, and the traditional observance during the week of Valentine’s Day is appropriate because the sentiments of caring and sharing match the salute’s purpose of expressing honor and appreciation to hospitalized veterans.

For 14 years, the late newspaper columnist Ann Landers devoted her column in January to national salute, asking readers to send Valentine cards and letters to hospitalized veterans at their nearest VA medical facility.

More than a million cards and letters are sent to hospitalized veterans each year during the salute. The tradition is continued by the “Annie’s Mail Box” reader advice column edited by Landers’ long-time associates Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar.

For details on volunteer opportunities, call Voluntary Service, 256-2771.

‘Expressions of love’ topic of seminar

“The Five Love Languages,” based on a best-selling book by Gary Chapman, is the basis of a “Love Languages” seminar presented by the Family Support Center.

The seminar is Feb. 10, 9-11 a.m. in the Family Support Center training room.

The seminar, led by Lorraina H. Kokangul, explores the problems of mutual misunderstanding and inattention to partners’ needs in relationships.

In the session, participants will examine causes of discord, disagreement and disenchantment in love relationships.

They will analyze Chapman’s five behavior characteristics couples can use to express love: “Words of Affirmation,” “Quality Time,” “Receiving gifts,” “Acts of Service,” and “Physical Touch.”

The program also looks at the key to expressing love, understanding and firm commitment to partners as learning, understanding and responding of each partner to the other, using the other partner’s “language.”

To register for the seminar, call the Family Support Center at 846-0741.